



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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Author Reveals Orchids' Best Kept Secret

Did you know that you can grow beautiful, hardy orchids in your own garden? These aren't the tropical orchids that are sold as house plants, but hardy, perennial orchids that will survive and thrive in the mid-Atlantic region. On Sunday, February 24, 2008 from 1:30 to 3 p.m., William Mathis, author of *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Hardy Perennial Orchids*, will be at Green Spring Gardens to enlighten audiences on how to successfully grow these dazzlers with just a little care and preparation.

Despite popular belief, a number of hardy orchids actually require temperatures at or well below freezing for several months each year to maintain proper growth, much like tulips and daffodils. In addition, you will learn why soil drainage and limited fertilizer use are key aspects to successful orchid development.

Bill Mathis first became interested in native terrestrial orchids in 1970 when he conducted a series of ecological studies on 'Small Yellow Lady's Slipper' orchids in Northwest Arkansas. During his 25 years as an agricultural research scientist, he maintained his interest in terrestrial orchids. In 2000 he started growing a number of upland and wetland terrestrial orchid species, but it wasn't until his retirement that he began the Wild Orchid Company. In 2005, he wrote his how-to book which gave frustrated gardeners a practical approach toward healthy and hardy orchids.

Following the lecture, stick around for refreshments and a book sale and signing. The cost is \$10 per person and prepaid reservations are requested. For more information or to reserve, call 703-642-5173.

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